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Letter dated 23 April 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government I wish to strongly protest the illegal visit of the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ismael Cem, to the Turkish occupied areas of the Republic of Cyprus between 16 and 18 April 2001. I would like to further draw attention and register the strong protest of my Government at the provocative public statements made by Mr. Cem, which further exacerbate the situation on the island and obstruct your efforts to continue the process of the talks for a solution to the Cyprus problem.

The arrival of the Turkish Foreign Minister to the occupied areas through an illegal point of entry constitutes a clear manifestation of the contempt of the Republic of Turkey for the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus, for the relevant resolutions and decisions of the United Nations and, furthermore, violates international law. More specifically, this illegal visit is contrary to the provisions of Security Council resolution 541 (1983), which deplored the unilateral declaration of independence by the illegal regime in the occupied part of Cyprus, described it as "legally invalid" and called for its withdrawal. Furthermore, the Security Council, in its resolution 550 (1984), reiterated the "call upon all States not to recognize the purported State of the 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' set up by secessionist acts and calls upon them not to facilitate or in any way assist the aforementioned entity".

Unfortunately, instead of promoting a climate of reconciliation and encouraging Mr. Denktash to abandon his well-known intransigence and return to the negotiating table with the necessary political will for finding a solution to the Cyprus problem, based on Security Council resolutions, Mr. Cem used the opportunity to unleash a torrent of provocative and threatening statements. The international community expected a completely different approach from the Turkish Foreign Minister and more specifically the announcement of the reversal of the decision, adopted at Ankara in November 2000 at a meeting of the political and military leadership, to abandon the talks, under your auspices.

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On the contrary, Mr. Cem reiterated his country's unacceptable demand for "a con-federal solution, based on equal sovereignty and on two states", a position which is contrary to the agreed parameters for the solution of the Cyprus problem, adopted and repeatedly reaffirmed by the Security Council and a number of other international and regional organizations. I would like to point out, that paragraph 2 of resolution 750 (1992) stated that "a Cyprus settlement must be based on a State of Cyprus with a single sovereignty and international personality and a single citizenship, with its independence and territorial integrity safeguarded, and comprising two politically equal communities as defined in paragraph 11 of the Secretary-General's report [(S/23780)] in a bi-communal and bi-zonal federation, and that such a settlement must exclude union in whole or in part with any other country or any form of partition or secession".

Moreover, Mr. Cem reiterated on a number of occasions his country's threats against the accession of Cyprus to the European Union, stating that the reaction of Turkey in such a case, "will have no limits". It is obvious that such statements constitute a deliberate attempt at blackmail of the European Union and intimidation of and threat of use of force, contrary to Article 2, paragraph 4 of the Charter of the United Nations, against the sovereignty and political independence of the Republic of Cyprus. It is, of course, ironic that Turkey, while promoting its own accession to the European Union, objects to the accession of a sovereign State that, as repeatedly stated in European Commission reports, meets all the political and economic criteria for accession.

Mr. Cem did not avoid the temptation of his predecessors and a host of other Turkish politicians who, on the many occasions of their illegal visits to the occupied area, use the island as a platform from where they engage in poisonous rhetoric and presentation of their chauvinist credentials in order to reinforce their position within the Turkish political system.

It is saddening that at the dawn of the twenty-first century and the strides that humanity has made in constructing a new international environment, where respect for international law and legality and full protection of human rights constitute the cornerstone of the policy of States, the Turkish Republic continues to behave in a manner reminiscent of some of the worst periods of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, with an anachronistic approach in its relations with its neighbours based on threats and the use of force.

It is all the more disappointing that Mr. Cem has come to Cyprus preferring to totally disregard the ever increasing voices of desperation emanating from our Turkish Cypriot compatriots, who are the ultimate victims of Turkey's military occupation of the northern part of Cyprus and its policy of integrating the occupied area with the faltering Turkish economy, which is the source of the malaise of the Turkish Cypriots. Suffice it to say that these provocative statements and threats made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey have struck a sensitive cord in many of our Turkish Cypriot compatriots, journalists and Turkish Cypriot politicians, who have publicly criticized this unacceptable display of intransigence by the Republic of Turkey. It is obvious that once more Turkey's policy, despite its public pronouncements to the contrary, overlooks the best interests of the Turkish Cypriot community, by denying them the opportunity to share the obvious social, economic and political benefits of the accession of Cyprus to the European Union.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter would be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 64, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Sotirios **Zackheos**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative